

The Porn Shoot

In 1985 I was starting to get regular clients as a commercial photographer and my deceased grandmother had left me enough money in her estate that I decided I could buy a house in Los Angeles. One of the homes that my girlfriend and I looked at, seemed so bad at first glance that I didn't even want to look inside. The place was high in the Hollywood Hills and owned by Onna White, the Academy Award-winning choreographer for such films as "Bye Bye Birdie" and "Oliver!". My girlfriend's mom was Nancy Walker, the mother in the TV show "Rhoda" (among many other roles) and known also as "Rosie--the quicker picker-upper" in Bounty commercials. Nancy was a friend of Onna's, and suggested we go see the house.

Once I got through the gate and up the stairs to see the property, I could tell that it had the potential for a fabulous view of the LA skyline. The house had been neglected and overgrown for so many years that it had been sitting on the market for quite a while. It had a swimming pool and glimpses of a fabulous view, but she had hung heavy black curtains to keep out the light, and had retreated to an inner room. The drive up to the house was a winding, narrow road with precipitous drops at points, and the lot itself was a small flat spot, so steep on two sides that you could fall off and never be found again. Built in 1955, it was just a two bedroom, two bath 1600 sq/ft house with an apartment above the garage and a great view. I bought it for \$400,000, and it's now worth over \$2 million.

We did an extensive remodel and it ended up looking so nice that I decided I might be able to make some money renting it as a photo location. I created a little flyer with photos and sent it to location scouts and other places that I thought might find a use. I also brought it to the attention of my old friends at Playboy, which was right down the street on Sunset Boulevard. It was perfect for them, private and close, and I began getting a steady stream of \$300 checks per day, plus nude young women running around the place. My girlfriend and I had split up by then, and my office was in the space above the garage, so photo shoots could have free run of the house, pool and small yard.

I had lots of photo shoots at the house over the years, including one for TV Guide, another for Good Housekeeping magazine with Victoria Principal, and a poster for Pamela Anderson, but it mostly ended up being nude shoots for men's magazines.

It is amazing what you can get used to, and normalize, if you're around it often enough. That happened to me when I worked at Playboy. At first it seemed extremely bizarre, and a bit titillating, but after a while I really did get used to it, and considered that a normal day at work. The same thing happened at the house, it gradually got more explicit, and I grew used to it. There was also money involved, and I remember one year I earned \$10,000 in cash in location fees.

Hank Londoner used my place often, and his lovely wife would style the photos for Penthouse Magazine shoots. They were such great people, and a lot of fun, it was easy to disregard what they were doing. I distinctly remember that along with the make up, they had a little container of glycerin they kept in a film canister that was labeled "PJ". I watched it being applied by Q-Tip to the very private parts of a young lady to make it appear she was more excited than she really was.

Another frequent guest was Suze Randall, who did work for more hard core magazines like Hustler, and others I had never even heard of. Suze was a riot of enthusiasm, with a thick British accent, and I remember her asking me to pull down my shorts one day to see if she might be able to use me in a photo shoot. I declined.

She would photograph lots of simulated sex scenes, and she had a written list of scenarios that would have to be checked off. This part touches that part, this thing licks that thing, and on and on. It was all very regimented and unsexy, and everyone knew why they were there, played their parts and got paid. Again, it became normal for me.

Word got around, and one day a guy came over to check the place out for a possible upcoming shoot. He was young, nice, seemed like a reasonable guy and said he would pay me \$2000 cash for one day to do a porn video. I accepted because I thought it was basically going to be what had already been going on, except with video instead of film. I was wrong.

On the day of that shoot I decided to hang out away from home with my new girlfriend who was very sweet, and I thought, sort of naïve. At some point I decided to tell her what was going on at my house, and to my surprise, she suggested that we go watch.

If you've seen the softcore porn movie "Caligula", the orgy scene is the closest thing I can think of to describe what we found. The young producer was getting his money's worth, as he had probably a dozen different "actors" and multiple film crews all over the house and yard. There was a couple being filmed on the couch in my office, another in the living room, another out by the pool, and even more in the bedroom. I saw a guy desperately trying to regain an erection, another outside who was evidently gay, and required his male "Fluffer" to stay interested in the action required of him. There was one guy standing around who didn't seem to have much to do, so we struck up a conversation. Turns out he was the "stunt cock" and was only needed when a man couldn't perform and they required a "money shot". Now there's a job!

My "naïve" girlfriend seemed to take it in stride and thought it was as amusing and enlightening as I did. It was definitely a slice of life that you ordinarily don't get to

see, and really, don't want to see. This was another one of those things that I can say I'm glad I experienced, but I wouldn't do it again.











